

IN THE WORKS

TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON

May 2004

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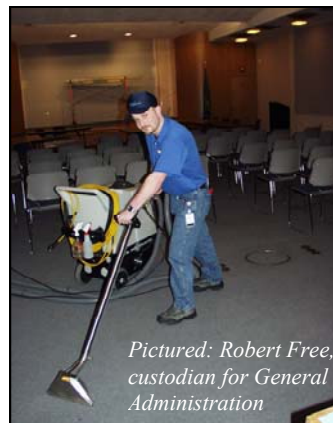


A Great Workforce, Getting Better

CUSTODIANS FOCUS ON COMPETITIVENESS

Many employees in state government are taking a closer look at the option of competitive contracting, which is one of the key changes resulting from the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002.

The competitive contracting option takes effect in July 2005. It is a date that custodians at the Department of General Administration keep in mind as they go about making improvement in the way they provide services to other state agencies.



Over the last year, the Custodial Program has conducted eye-opening examinations of its operations, including recent surveys of 800 customers in three major buildings on the Capitol Campus. The 90-member custodial staff has learned two key things during this time:

- ★ Their costs are high.
- ★ Their methods of cleaning need improvements in efficiency.

“We needed this information to have a baseline for comparing our services to the private sector,” said Pattie Williams, a custodial supervisor at General Administration. “We wanted to know: Would our customers choose us if they had a choice?”

That is just one of the reasons the custodians will test new cleaning methods beginning mid-June in the Natural Resources Building. The three-month pilot project is part of a continuing effort to improve service and become more competitive.

The new process focuses on specialty cleaning tasks. It is patterned after a successful model in the public and private sectors that has proven to reduce absenteeism, boost safety and improve overall efficiency.

Continued...

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The Boeing Company, which has employed the innovative cleaning method at its own facilities, is helping guide General Administration through the pilot.

“I think it could save this program,” said Cory Noffsinger, a custodial supervisor for General Administration. “I think it can really work. It’s a great opportunity.”

General Administration employees, perhaps more than other state workers, are acutely aware of competitive contracting. Many of the services that General Administration offers to state government – custodial, mail services, purchasing, vehicle rentals, painting, grounds work and more – are often performed by contractors in other states.

But two years before General Administration began writing the rules that will govern competitive contracting, the department began thorough reviews of several of its services and costs, with custodians among them.

“This is an overall step we’re taking that’s in the right direction of helping our employees,” said Williams.



*Pictured:
Tien Phan,
custodian
for General
Administration*

It’s a point echoed at the top.

“We want to make all of our employees as competitive as they can be,” said General Administration director Rob Fukai. “We want them to win.” ★

BARGAINING UPDATE

The Labor Relations Office recently reached agreement on ground rules with the coalition of unions each representing fewer than 500 state employees. Negotiations will begin May 24th.

The coalition includes:

- ★ Washington Association of Professional Biologists
- ★ International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 76
- ★ Washington State Nurses Association
- ★ Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 32
- ★ International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 760
- ★ International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
- ★ Washington State Patrol Communication Managers Association

Talks still are proceeding with Local 17 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 117 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Washington Federation of State Employees, and the team representing The Evergreen State College and some community colleges.

Negotiations also are underway with the health coalition, the group of unions negotiating the amount of dollars expended on behalf of each employee for medical benefits.

“We’re getting busy,” said Gary Moore, Governor Locke’s chief negotiator. “I’m hopeful we can start making some movement and get some tentative agreements reached.”

Currently, the Labor Relations Office has dates scheduled with all of the labor unions representing state employees to move forward with negotiations.

TRAINING WILL BE OFFERED BASED ON NEED

Who needs what training? When? Where? As the Department of Personnel (DOP) wraps up planning for a comprehensive, statewide Washington Works training program, it has prepared a tool to help state agencies and higher education institutions clarify their Washington Works training needs.

Distributed in May, the *Planning Tool for Washington Works Training* outlines the courses DOP currently has planned to cover key subject areas within Washington Works (such as compensation, labor relations and competitive contracting).

It also indicates which courses are recommended, required, or optional for specific target audiences, including human resource professionals, managers and supervisors, and employees.

Some courses, such as change management and labor relations basics, are already available to support employees and agencies with their early readiness and planning efforts. A number of additional courses will be added to the schedule in the next few months. See DOP's [training web site](http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington_works.htm), for a list of available courses:
http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington_works.htm

Other training opportunities will be offered closer to actual implementation of various Washington Works components, so that participants can immediately apply what they've learned. ★

ADDITIONAL CIVIL SERVICE RULES AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

New draft rules were posted May 19 on the Department of Personnel web site. Subjects include training, public records, personnel files, internships, general provisions and director's review. Go to <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/rules.htm> to review the rules and provide feedback. The informal comment period runs through June 9.

Most of the new civil service rules will be adopted in July 2004 and will become effective in July 2005. These rules are being revised one last time, based on feedback received. The proposed rules will be posted in late June for a final comment period prior to adoption. ★

BARGAINING 101: DEFINING TERMS

Bargaining Unit: A group of employees in positions determined by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to constitute a "unit" represented by an employee organization (labor union) and appropriate for bargaining purposes. Employees in a bargaining unit are employed by the same agency. Supervisors and non-supervisors cannot be included in the same unit.

Bargaining Team: Individuals chosen to represent and negotiate on behalf of management or a union in negotiations at the bargaining table.

Ground Rules: Rules negotiated at the start of bargaining that address such things as:

- ★ frequency of meetings
- ★ whether or not involvement in the negotiations is work time
- ★ when and how proposals are submitted
- ★ how information about negotiations is to be communicated to others

YOUR COMMENTS SOUGHT ON DRAFT COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING MANUAL

June 3, 2004 will mark the release by General Administration of the initial public draft of the manual to support the competitive contracting process for state agencies and employees. The manual consists of eight chapters, four of which have been posted in draft version on the [General Administration website](#).

Comments to date on the four draft chapters show that stakeholders faced challenges in reviewing the manual's content one chapter at a time. In response, General Administration changed its approach. Instead of publishing chapters independently, the department will provide on June 3 a complete, user-friendly manual for comment.

Not only will it include the remaining chapters, but based on stakeholder feedback, it also will contain updates to the existing chapters.

General Administration is seeking comment on the revised manual to be published on its website in early June. Please send comments to csr@ga.wa.gov

Remaining Chapters:

- ★ Screening and identification of candidate functions.
- ★ Contract management and monitoring.
- ★ Implementation check list.
- ★ Transition planning.

Next Steps:

June – Distribute draft manual for feedback.
July – Update manual based on feedback.
August – Distribute final manual.
September – October – Prepare overview training on competitive contracting rules and guidance manual.
Fall 2004 – Provide competitive contracting training.

Have feedback on this issue of IN THE WORKS? Email it to washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov

***Check out the [WASHINGTON WORKS website](#) for more information.
Use the online [feedback form](#) to comment on any aspect of the reform effort.***

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